

Hunter's Ambulance Service, Inc.

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Testimony of
Michael Loiz, Operations Director
Hunter's Ambulance Service

Human Services Committee

Tuesday, February 19, 2013

Senator Slossberg, Representative Abercrombie and distinguished members
of the Human Services Committee.

My name is Michael Loiz. I am the Director of Operations of Hunter's Ambulance Service. Hunter's provides emergency ambulance service at the basic life support and paramedic levels for five communities in central Connecticut serving a population of 132,000. Hunter's responds to nearly 60,000 requests for emergency and non-emergency ambulance service annually with a highly skilled workforce of 200 Emergency Medical Service Workers, utilizing 29 ambulances and 2 paramedic intercept vehicles. I am here today to speak on three pieces of proposed legislation that have an impact on the overall delivery of emergency medical care and transportation throughout the state.

Raised Bill No. 6412, An Act Concerning Safe and Appropriate Transportation for Non-ambulatory Medicaid Recipients.

Thank you for raising this very important bill. In addition to ambulance, Hunter's provides wheelchair level of medical transportation for patients throughout the state. We follow very strict, but appropriate and necessary medical necessity guidelines which we use to determine the safest most appropriate form of medical transportation.

"Concern For Others"

222 Mill Street
Berlin 828-8909

594 Washington St.
Middletown 346-9627

20 Parkway Place
Meriden 235-4441

47-A North Plains Industrial Rd.
Wallingford 269-6586

595 Bank St.
New London 443-1212

We [Hunter's] are part of a state-wide transportation network of providers that work within a structured system that evaluates patient needs and authorizes the most cost effective mode of transportation that is safe for the patient.

Patients who require stretcher transport for their medical condition, require the assistance of trained personnel, using specialized equipment and a vehicle that meets state and federal safety standards.

The budget mitigation plan filed prior to this legislature convening, prescribes to introduce a new form of transport called a stretcher van. The introduction of this type of vehicle is for perceived financial reasons and not based on patient condition or need. The proponent believes that the state will save money, and I question at what expense, the health and safety of our residents? I sure hope not.

We believe the medical necessity standards we as a state have in place, provide for the safest, most cost effective means of medical transportation for our patients and therefore I urge your support of Raised Bill No. 6412, An Act Concerning Safe and Appropriate Transportation for Non-ambulatory Medicaid Recipients.

Proposed Bill No. 594, An Act Concerning Restoring Medicaid Reimbursement Levels for Emergency Ambulance Transportation

Passing this bill is critical for maintaining life-saving ambulance services. Similar to hospital emergency departments, ambulance services are required to be staffed, equipped and prepared to respond to emergencies in our community without regard to any patient's ability to pay.

Fuel costs, insurance, labor and benefit costs have escalated significantly over the past five years. Restoration of the emergency reimbursement rate is vital to all ambulance services and the communities we serve.

The legislature reduced the Medicaid emergency ambulance rate paid to providers by 10% in the 2010-2011 session. This year, the budget mitigation plan cut the non-emergency ambulance rate by 10%. This new rate (\$196.94) is only 52% of the allowed Medicare Rate and 34% of the State of CT DPH approved rate for these emergency services. In other words, for every emergency ambulance transport, the Department of Social Services Medicaid program reimburses 34% of the rate that the Department of Public Health has approved as a fair and equitable rate for this service. Even with this

restoration, the rate would only increase to 38% of the Public Health rate with a reimbursement of \$218.82.

Without this restoration, we will be forced to make financial decisions regarding staffing levels, employee benefits and vehicle maintenance which could be detrimental to the ability to provide quality medically necessary transportation.

Raised Bill No. 6414, An Act Concerning Nonemergency medical Transportation for Medicaid Recipients

Hunter's provides medical transportation as a provider under the current Non~ Emergency Medical Transport (NEMT) program ASO model between the State of Connecticut DSS and Logisticare.

In spite of our best efforts to call confirm appointments for the patient transports we are assigned by Logisticare, we experience approximately a 20% "no show" rate of the patients. We have expended the labor, vehicle and fuel expense only to have the patient not show for their appointment. We are not compensated at all for this loss this bill would serve to cover a portion of the costs of these "no show" calls at 50% of the prevailing non-emergency rate.

I urge your support of Raised Bill No. 6414, An Act Concerning Nonemergency medical Transportation for Medicaid Recipients as a fair and equitable means of compensation for the uncompensated costs incurred through no fault of the provider.

Respectfully Submitted,



Michael A. Loiz
Director of Operations